

# The Cost of Discipleship

Mark 10:17-22

## Introduction

Throughout history, almost every culture has a legend about a fountain of youth. In fact, there is a tourist attraction in St. Augustine, FL that bills itself as the Fountain of Youth that Ponce de Leon was looking for in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. If you visit there, you can get a sip from the fountain and even a bottle to take home from the gift shop, to use when feeling tired and run down. This obsession is understandable. Nobody wants to die and nobody in their right mind wants to keep aging forever. The fountain of youth is the quest for eternal life. This was the reason for the question from the rich young man in our Gospel reading today.

## Mistakes

One mistake our rich young man made in his question to Jesus was he called Jesus “Good Teacher.” Jesus is definitely good, but the title “Good Teacher” showed he didn’t recognize Jesus for who He was. It was a polite way to address a teacher, one in authority. It would be like calling someone “good father.” Jesus, in His answer, isn’t objecting to being called “good.” He objects to this feeble attempt at respect that doesn’t recognize His divinity. Only God is good, Jesus is good; Jesus is God.

## Looking to the Law

A second mistake is that he thought he could find the answer to his question in the Law: “What must I do?” Jesus could have done like St. Paul in **Acts 16**, when he told the Philippian jailer to “believe in the Lord Jesus” to be saved. But He didn’t. Jesus knew the man was looking to the Law for his answer, so He started where the young man was. His answer was an impossibility: “Keep the Law perfectly.”

## Keeping the Law

The young man’s response that he has kept these “from his youth” may sound like false bravado, but what he means is that he has lived up to the standards of society. Over the years, society had watered down the requirements of the Commandments. After all, no one can keep them perfectly. When you look at the Law the way society does, the rich young man had been a good boy. We hear people talking like that today about a recently deceased person, as if that’s what gets them into heaven.

## Inheritance

Then Jesus says something that doesn’t make sense. This man can get eternal life if he *does one more thing*. What happened to salvation by grace alone through faith alone? If Jesus says, “just believe”, this man will misunderstand saving faith. He must be taught that while good works are not necessary for salvation, they are necessary. Or as we have seen in our study of **James**, “faith alone saves, but faith is never alone.” He’s showing the young man what it looks like to be a follower of Jesus.

## Stipulations of a Will

I'm sure you've seen movies where a person inherits a mansion that is reportedly haunted. But it comes with a stipulation. To take possession of the house, the heir must stay in it overnight. Here are two stipulations to our inheritance of eternal life in Christ.

### Suffering

(Read **Romans 8:14-17**). The Holy Spirit makes us children of God. If the only begotten Son of God suffered, how do we, who are adopted, dare think we will not have to suffer? It's a family trait.

### Service

(Read **Colossians 3:23-24**). How can a reward, something you earn, be an inheritance, something that's a gift? We are made children to receive the inheritance. Jesus came to serve and expects us to do the same. Children serve their parents. When we serve, we're not serving others. We're serving our heavenly Father.

## The Cost of Discipleship

We see that grace is free. But living under grace does not mean living to oneself. Living under grace means being a disciple of Jesus Christ. In following Jesus, we walk where He walked. So, we suffer with Him. We serve God with Him. Grace is free, but it's not cheap.

## Means of Grace

The thing of it is, we're not expected to suffer and serve under our own strength. When we hear the Word and receive the Sacrament, God forgives our sins and strengthens our faith to be able to be His disciples and endure the **COST OF DISCIPLESHIP**.

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*And the peace of God,  
Which surpasses all understanding,  
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

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